

Living Faith Messenger

Fall Edition

From the Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Troy Billow

"FRESH SLATE"

September 2019

There's an old statement that says, "Let's start off with a fresh slate." It's a great feeling to wipe the board clean of all the past scribbles and start fresh. I remember back in 1974 when I was 12 years old in the 6th grade at Fish Creek elementary school in Ohio my teacher, Mr. Fletcher, used to make us clean the chalkboards if you didn't do your homework that day or said something disrespectful to him or unkind to a fellow student in class. Of course I had my fair share of cleaning the chalkboards and erasers that year, but what Mr. Fletcher didn't realize was that I actually *liked* cleaning the chalkboards after school – I got a great feeling of satisfaction when they were all clean and ready for a new day of writing lessons. Little did I know at the time that teaching would become my life calling.

You can imagine my pleasant surprise when I found an old wood-framed chalkboard with sticks of chalk and an eraser in the basement of High Road Bible Church (a real find as well as antique). It was probably left over from some old Sunday school days gone by, and of course I put it up in my office and wrote a big verse of scripture on it. It's actually still there today if you want to stop by and see it. I also like bulletin boards as you can tell from looking around the church.



This past year by God's grace and design, MVCC and HRBC have come together to wipe clean the chalkboards of their individual church history and write a fresh chapter of life and ministry at our new church known as "Living Faith" – a name I love, by the way. After 30 years of serving the Lord in church ministry in various forms, I can tell you that this new opportunity and this clean slate that we now have together in front of us is exceptionally rare, and we can already see God's hand now writing some of His blessings of provision upon our blackboard – it's been truly amazing to watch!

Of course sometimes as God's children we fail to do our homework of faithfulness toward him or remember kindness toward one another, sometimes we have bad moments of being disrespectful in class or even hurtful to one another, but we can remind ourselves that "His compassions never fail, they are new every morning, great is His faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23) - and we can see that God himself wipes clean the scribbles of our chalkboard from that day. **The very heart of Christianity is that He forgives us and in turn we forgive one another.**

What a beautiful truth that God promises to wipe clean the chalkboard of our messy lives each morning if we but ask him (Jn. 1:9). I think God likes cleaning our chalkboards and we can find forgiveness with one another in light of His grace to us, so we all can keep our chalkboards clean for another day of life lessons with each other. And we can also all look forward to a fresh start for the new day ahead that we now have in ministry together as ***Living Faith***.

Pastor Troy

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C.E.F. 5-Day Club, Sunday School & Youth Group

By: Megan Bustamante

This summer has been a wonderful time of growth for the youth ministries at Living Faith Community Church. From running our first outreach program to seeing new children come to church, the Lord has been at work.



Things really took off this summer with our church hosting a 5-Day club through Child Evangelism Fellowship. Through this club we were able to share the gospel story with 12 different kids and build relationships with these children and their families. The kids and leaders alike had a great week laughing, playing games, singing songs, learning memory verses and hearing about Jesus. Please continue to pray for the children and families we came in contact with through this club as God started a work that week in many students.

The excitement from 5-Day club has carried over into our other children's ministries in the church. Both in Sunday school and youth group, we have seen new students come that are excited to learn and grow. In Sunday school we just completed a series on the miracles of Jesus. This was a very powerful series as it was a great way to not only share these stories with some students for the first time but also have an opportunity to share that Jesus loves us the same way he loved the people in the stories. In youth group we started the school year by taking a look at Colossians 3:23 and what it means to do our school works, chores and homework for the Lord. I love that we are able to spend Thursday nights looking at what the Bible has to say about what is going on in the lives of the students. It is a fun challenge to work through their questions and situations together and to grow more like Jesus together too.

I am so thankful for the support of the church and congregation for these ministries. There is a lot of things going on and it would not be possible without the prayers, volunteers and support of God's people.

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Someone You Should Know



Can you guess who this is? If you guessed Darrell Blasier, you were right! His story, in his own words, needs no editing. It is a story of a typical childhood growing up in the 60's and 70's, meeting and marrying his high school sweetheart and his testimony of faith. Here it is in his own words:

"I was born August 15, 1957 at Silver Cross Hospital in Joliet, IL

I grew up in Lockport, IL. My father was a steel worker at CECO Steel in Lemont, IL and once I went to school, my mother took a job with the phone company (AT&T). I have one older brother, Rex Blasier, who lives with his family in Baytown, TX.

I had a normal childhood, doing all the things that a boy growing up in the 60's would do, riding bikes, building forts and playing sports. In my teens, I was an avid martial arts student. My first car was a green VW Beetle, I spent a whole paycheck to buy top of the line speakers so I could blast my 8-track tapes. Life was good.

I have two scars from childhood, both given to me courtesy of my brother Rex. At age four, I got a Superman costume for Christmas, my brother Rex assured me that while I was wearing that costume I could fly. My maiden flight from

the second-floor railing proved otherwise. Hence, the scar on my chin. Years later while rounding a corner at our grandparents house my face met with a brick that was conveniently resting in my brother's hand. Enter scar number two over my left eye. However, I believe I evened the score when I accidentally backed my Mother's car into his freshly painted Challenger. To his credit, he did not kill me.



I met René in 1974 when I was a Junior at Lockport Township High School. We were married on September 24, 1977 at Maple Lawn Christian Church in Joliet, IL. We have three daughters, Courtney Blasier age 38, mother of our only grandchild, Hannah Blasier age 14, who lives in Lockport, IL. Shannon Blasier age 36, who works for Argonne National Laboratory as the Training Program Coordinator in the Nuclear Waste Management Division, she is engaged to be married to her fiancé Daniel McGann and lives in Joliet, IL and Erin Blasier age 32, who works for the Illinois Department of Human Services, as a Human Services Caseworker Manager, and lives in Downers Grove, IL.

We built our house on High Road in 1988 (four houses down from the church). Our next-door neighbor invited the girls to Sunday School and René and I began attending a short time later. We have been attending at High Road for 31 years.

In 1978, I was serving as a Military Police Officer in the U.S. Army. My duty station was the

tropical oasis known as Fort Riley Kansas. My assignment was to oversee prisoners held in the Fort's jail facility. The jail was set up in Posts. Post One was an intake station and in my rotation I sometimes shared this task with fellow MP Jerry Tharpe. Since most prisoners arrived during working hours, the midnight shift was usually very quiet. At Post One guards would play cards, or talk to pass the long hours. Jerry was a Christian, married with two young children and very involved in his church. I was newly married and still adjusting to a life of "we" instead of just "me".

One night Jerry brought a box of Bible trivia to pass the time. Looking back I'm sure it was an opportunity for him to witness to me. He was surprised at how well I did with the trivia. Little did he know that I had attended church since the day I was born, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday evenings and every church function held in between until I left home at 19 for the service. We talked about faith and he asked if I was involved in a church. He was saddened to hear that I was not. As with a lot of young people, at the ripe old age of 20 I felt I had spent a fair amount of time with God and I was okay taking a break and being on my own. I still believed, but I wasn't pursuing or growing. One night Jerry sensed that I was troubled. He asked me what was going on. In truth, we'd been faced with an unexpected car repair that left us with no money for groceries. I was worried, but didn't want to admit that I had fallen short as a husband and provider, so I tried to shrug him off by saying I was fine, just tired. Jerry persisted and I finally confided the situation to him. He said he understood, that sometimes life throws us a curve ball, but God is always faithful. He then turned and pulled \$50 from his pocket and said it was money that he and his wife were going to donate the next day at church for a special offering that would be distributed to those in need and he wanted me to take it. I tried to refuse, but he wouldn't have it. To understand his generosity you need to know that just like me, Jerry also made only \$625 dollars a month.

Jerry's kindness affected me greatly, it's something I will never forget. He gave me much

more than \$50 dollars that day. He showed me where my focus should be. Do your best, whatever it is big or small. Never give up, situations can change in the blink of an eye. Trust in God, he has all the answers.



I have to say, I can't help but wonder how it all went by so fast. One minute I was in high school the next I was a Grandpa. I'd like to say it's been all roses, but we all know you don't get through life without a few thorns. Not sure what God still has in store, but I know whatever it is I won't be doing it alone. Thanks to all my family and friends for putting up with me this long."

~Thank you for sharing your story with us!

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Prayer List

Please be in prayer for the following:

1. Membership Sundays in October.
2. Continued growth.
3. Donation of property.
4. Continued blessings for our Sunday School and Youth Group.
5. Protection for our church and pastors.
6. A "full house" on Dedication Sunday, November 3rd.

Thank You, Father, for answered prayers
and Your Presence in our lives!

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“God’s Warriors” is our new Young Adult Group (ages 18-40) meeting monthly to discuss life as Christians, facing different obstacles, getting to know one another and building lifelong friendships. The next outing is scheduled for Saturday, October 19th. The group is planning to head out to the Dollinger Family Farm in Channahon for the pumpkin patch, mazes, hayrides etc. and have dinner afterward. If you would like more information call Katy Heinrich (513) 267-0074.

August 17th at John & Allyce’s



September 7th at Keith & Samantha’s



Please Pray

God's presence and peace for our
homebound members:

Sarah Delgado, Joan DeBauche, Emmitt &
Marion Hays, Leroy & Marilyn Crettol, Vivian
Wagner & Helene White

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Birthdays

October

Bill Curtis	Oct. 5
Debbie Sandy	Oct. 10
Pat Pepe	Oct. 15
Scott Gehle	Oct. 25
Matt Birk	Oct. 28

November

Crista Rozanski	Nov. 14
Marilyn Crettol	Nov. 24
Tom Healy	Nov. 24

December

Sarah Gehle	Dec. 3
David Skowronski	Dec. 8
Robert Thompson	Dec. 14
Virginia Beehn	Dec. 18
Joyce Skowronski	Dec. 25

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Elsie's Pantry

"Nourishing Body and Soul since 2000"

Elsie's Pantry began as an idea in 1999 from Pastor David Nichols and Jacquelyn Pyle (Elsie's daughter) and \$1,800 in Memorial Funds after the passing of Elsie Schraeder, a longtime member of Moraine Valley Community Church and Foster Park Church. Elsie was well known for her sacrificial generosity and Jackie thought a food pantry would be a fitting tribute to her. The idea was brought to the Mission Committee and they embraced the idea wholeheartedly. A small room was cleared and with a food drive from the congregation as well as 25 post office bins full of food from the Worth Post Office Stamp Out Hunger campaign, we were ready to begin.



amy (left), Danny, Brian and Aimee Heinrich helped set up the food pantry that opened Saturday Moraine Valley Community Church, 8601 W. 107th St. in Palos Hills. The pantry will provide emergency aid to residents in need of food. (Photo by Rosemary Mazurowski)

Palos church makes room for food pantry for needy

By the middle of May, 2000 we began our ministry with four volunteers and five families a week. Ten years later we were up to 30 families a week, and now we average 55-65 families a week. In August 2019 we served 252 households consisting of 725 people. Since 2000 we have served over

84,000 people, and to this day there is no one getting paid, we still volunteer.

The USDA government commodities we receive come from the Greater Chicago Food Depository, (about 5,000 pounds a month). The meat, canned goods, milk, eggs and cheese fills 3 freezers and a small industrial refrigerator as well as our shelves. Through the GCFD we also receive food from various local stores through their Food Rescue program. We receive roughly 1,500 pounds a week (more or less) which consists of meat, dairy, deli, produce, groceries, bread and cake. We also get extra Pepperidge Farm breads, donated foods and produce regularly. We currently distribute over 120,000 pounds of food a year.

In 2010 we added Elsie's Pooch Pantry which is run by Tommie. Donations come from the public, Worth Animal Hospital, Southwest Animal Hospital in Palos Heights and the Community Resource Center in Palos Hills.



Christmas Toys and Food for our furry clients, 2018

Elsie's is more than a food pantry. We also offer flu shots from Walgreens, cell phones through Sprint and Safelink, Internet for \$10 a month through AT&T, "birthday bags" from

the Kiwanis and Christmas toys through private donations, Kiwanis and Toys for Tots.



Jane helping wrap hundreds of toys, 2018

There are monthly blood pressure readings by a registered nurse too. An "extreme couponer" from the neighborhood donates shampoo, conditioner, make up etc. worth \$3,500 every year. Several neighbors donate freshly picked garden tomatoes and vegetables.

God has blessed this little pantry from day one, and we are truly grateful. However, this year had started looking bleak. For the first time in nearly 20 years we were using the original Memorial Funds. It was scary at first, but we were reminded how God has **blessed** us, and to just have **faith**. Thank You, Father, for touching the hearts of generous people this month! We have collected \$963 through a fundraiser at Savior Divine and another

\$620 for the Hungerwalk from Living Faith (which will be matched up to \$500). "Fishes and Loaves Pantry"...that's what the pantry has always been known for and if God wants us to continue serving the needy, we will always be. Thank you for your support of this ministry!

Those who serve: David Skowronski-Coordinator, Karen Walsh-Co-Director, Pastors John, Troy and Marty, Al, Bob, Carmen, Chuck, Daryll, Donna, Gloria, Herb, Jackie, Jane, Joyce, Joanne, Juana, Linda, Matt, Naomi, Scott, Tom P, Tom W and Tommie – Elsie's Pantry Staff



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

From: Beth Heinrich

If there are any articles you would like to see or someone you would like to highlight please make sure I have that info by December 12th. Our next newsletter will be the winter edition coming in January. Please email me at beth.heinrich62@gmail.com Thank you!

-Mark Your Calendars-

Upcoming Events

Membership Sunday Oct. 6th & 13th

All Church Bonfire Saturday October 26th

Upcoming Events Continued

Dedication Sunday, November 3rd

Congregational Business Meeting after Worship,

Sunday, November 17th

Worship Service Sun. Dec. 22nd at 10:45 am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sun. Dec. 22nd at 7 pm

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"Behind the Scenes"

Have you noticed the gleaming white church when you came last Sunday? What about the freshly painted stairway outside? Or the cameras now in place protecting our church, not to mention those who keep watch on us every Sunday morning? Did you happen to come across our new website? How about the beautiful landscaping in the summer and the salted driveway and sidewalks in the winter? There are a few gentlemen that have done or continue to do extensive work at the church "behind the scenes". We all pull together as a family for our church and do what we can, and there are many who go above and beyond, but just for this moment, the next time you look at the clean fresh building and grounds, think of Pastor Troy

Billow, Darrell Blasier and Larry Sandy. If you happen to notice the cameras or check out our new website, think of Roy Beehn. And when you are here to worship in these tumultuous times, think of Bob Case and his security team keeping watch. These are only five of many who are working together, unpaid and (formerly) anonymous. There are so many others, such as the Worship Team giving many hours of their busy lives every week to honor God and fill our church with their beautiful music and voices. There are Leaders who meet regularly to keep our church running smooth and a Treasurer who, for many years, has been a good steward with what the Lord has blessed us with. Our entrance doors are tastefully decorated every season with gorgeous handmade signs and wreaths! There are ladies who go above and beyond planning and setting up beautifully decorated tables for luncheons and dinners several times a year. There are people who keep our church clean and maintained, too. Some take it upon themselves to call our shut-ins and send cards. Men who lead bible studies, people who read Scripture, those who bring snacks for Sunday mornings, greet people and hand out bulletins; there's even people who bring wood to start our bonfires. We also have volunteers that help with Sunday School and lead Prayer meetings. There are so many "behind the scenes" things going on here and I'm sorry if I missed anything.

Lastly, have you ever wondered "What can I do?" There are many ways you can help. No job is too small or insignificant. We are all one in this church, brothers and sisters in Christ. Even if you can't do any of the things listed above, there is something we can all do. Pray.

This is the Lord's church so let's all give what we can, help where it's needed, pray continuously and stay united. It is such an honor to work for a King!

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Circle of Sisters
May 3, 2019
Tea Party



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From the Circle of Leaders

This has been a busy time for your Circle of Leaders (COL). The main project we have worked on is the legal work needed to create our new combined congregation as Living Faith Community Church. Both the original High Road Bible Church and the original Moraine Valley Community Church members had to approve the documents required to make this merge happen. We are currently in the final stages of the merge, and by the time you read this newsletter, we will likely be officially one church family.

A special Dedication Sunday is planned for Sunday, November 3, 2019 with guest speaker Bryan Moak. We will celebrate our official status and name of Living Faith Community Church. As we write this, a new logo for the church has already been chosen, and the sign in front of the building will soon have our new name, website, and logo on it.

Exciting things are happening in our church ministry. Our attendance numbers have increased, both in Sunday worship service and in our Bible Studies on Thursday night. Nearly as many people come to Bible Study as come to Sunday services. A new study will start on September 26 led jointly by Pastor John Billow and Rob Case, looking at our Spiritual Gifts and the ways we can use them. It is not too late to join the Study, so come and join us.

Living Faith Youth Group is thriving under the leadership of Megan Bustamante. The C.E.F. 5-Day Club held this summer had about 12 kids attending each day. Some of those who

came to the 5-Day Club are now attending Youth Group and/or Sunday School. Our Children's Choir is scheduled to sing for us on Sunday, September 22, 2019 and we hope they will sing for us again soon. We have enough children in Sunday School that it was decided to start a class for the toddlers and babies who are now known as "Little Lambs".

Our ladies plan to attend a Women's Conference, "Revive Our Hearts" in Aurora on September 28th.

An All-Church Bonfire is planned for Saturday, October 26, 2019. Everyone is invited for this event.

Tom and Katy Heinrich are heading up a young adult's group that have chosen the name "God's Warriors". They meet monthly at various homes, and the numbers are increasing.

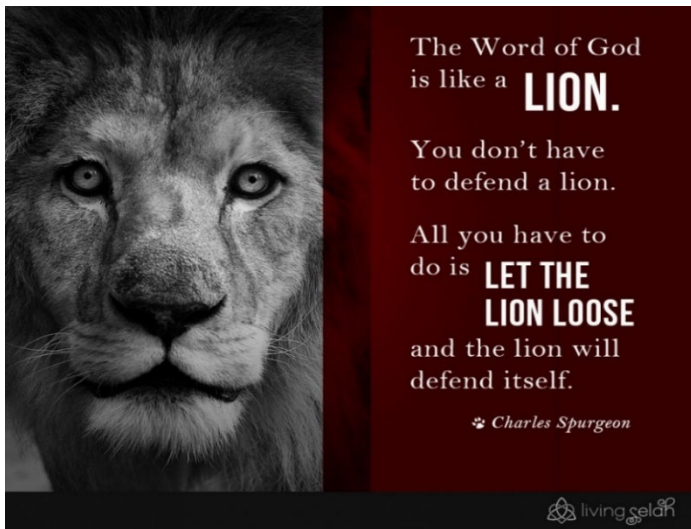
Computer savvy members are working on our new website at www.livingfaithchurch.org. It is currently under construction, but you can visit it now and watch the progress.

Other members have pressure washed the church building and painted the steps to freshen up its appearance. Others have installed new thermostats and checked the furnaces and air conditioning to keep our people comfortable both summer and winter.

Most importantly, our people are prayer warriors. We have seen supposedly impossible situations be healed by the Lord. Prayers have been answered for health, marriages, spiritual healing and more. So,

join us for prayer both on Sunday mornings at 10 AM before worship, and on Thursday evenings at 6 PM in the Conference Room. And, if you are unable to attend, please keep our church and people in your private prayers. Pray that we may reach into the community and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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First Annual LFCC All-Church Picnic

The First Annual Living Faith Community Church All-Church Picnic was held after worship service on Sunday, September 15, 2019. The weather that day started out overcast and rainy, but by the time worship service ended, the skies were clear and sunny, and the temperature was very comfortably warm.

About 60 or more from our church family attended. The table of chicken and side dishes was overflowing with delicious food, and the table full of cookies, fruit and various desserts was more than tempting. About 15 or more children attended and thoroughly enjoyed the extensive playset with slides and rope bridges, etc. Some folks played yard games while others relaxed in camp chairs

carefully set in the shade. But everyone there seemed to have a marvelous time.



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